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SUBJECT: JORDAN: CAPITALIZING ON THE JOINT COMMITTEE

1. (u) Jordan's government and business community are hailing the first annual U.S.-Jordan Joint Economic Committee meeting held in Washington December 11, and the private-sector trade events that surrounded it, as unqualified successes. Jordanian participants were impressed by and appreciative of the high-level USG interest the meetings received, notably participation by Commerce Secretary Evans, USTR Zoellick, AUSTR Novelli, A/S Wayne, and

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A/S Burns. U.S. participants in some of the private sector meetings similarly were impressed by the energy and professionalism of members of the Jordanian private sector delegation. Jordanian government and private sector leaders were especially grateful to Amy Schedlbauer, Carl Oberg, Ned Saums, and Roger Freeman for their key contributions to the success of the JC events.

2. (u) The meetings have generated a number of follow-up opportunities, both officially and with private sector groups. USTR is preparing an official schedule of commitments agreed to by each side at the December 11 meeting. In addition to these official commitments, the JC events surrounding the official meeting created numerous follow-up projects for the private sector. They include:

-- TIJARA counterpart: We continue to encourage the formation of a TIJARA counterpart in the U.S. to include representatives of interested U.S. business associations, U.S. government agencies, and the Jordanian Embassy. Ideally, a U.S. association such as the National U.S.-Arab Chambers of Commerce (NUSACC) would work with a lead USG agency such as DoC to invite interested associations, with invitations based initially on attendees of the DoC-sponsored event December 12. The focus of such a group would be primarily to raise awareness among the memberships of the associations about opportunities offered under the FTA, and to encourage continued cooperation between U.S. associations and their Jordanian counterparts. Ultimately, meetings between the two groups could become a fixture of future JC meetings.

-- AJEX support: DoC DAS Molly Williamson agreed to lead a group of U.S. business associations to Amman to participate in the AJEX program (the American products show) March 26-28. Invitees will include at minimum participants in the December 12 DoC-hosted event. The purpose of the mission, in addition to supporting JABA's AJEX program, will be to create a core of U.S. businessmen in key associations who can advise members of their associations about business realities in Jordan (including standard of living, investment climate, and security issues) that are often at odds with - and much better than - perceptions from media reports. Having a group of such businessmen who have experienced Jordan first-hand, it is thought, will help tear down one key barrier to new trade and investment under the FTA, i.e., misperceptions about Jordan's business and security environment.

-- Trade finance: Financing is one of the main obstacles cited by Jordanians and Americans to expanding bilateral trade and investment. A seminar on trade and investment financing under the FTA would have a wide and enthusiastic audience in Amman. It would raise awareness about the services offered by EXIM, OPIC and TDA, as well as by private banks. As Econoff discussed with EXIM's Robert Bosco on the margins of the DoC event, the best time frame for such an event would be during the AJEX show, March 26-28. JABA and local banks would be willing to help support such an event. We would welcome further discussions with Washington to pursue this idea.

-- Pharmaceuticals Follow-up: The Jordanian Pharmaceutical Association (JAPM), in cooperation with the U.S. generic pharmaceutical manufacturers' association (GPhA), the Embassy, and DoC, will encourage a group of small and medium-sized U.S. generic pharmaceuticals manufacturers to visit Jordan on a fact-finding tour in the coming months.

Currently, we are looking at late May-early June, to coincide with a World Trade Week program sponsored by World Trade Center Amman and the Jordan Exporters' Association. The goal of the fact-finding tour is to give the companies an overview of manufacturing facilities in Jordan and to encourage partnerships between U.S. and Jordanian manufacturers. This activity will build on the ongoing cooperation between JAPM, PhRMA, and the GOJ.

-- QIZ Follow-up: Following on the success of the QIZ roundtable held at DoS on December 13, the Embassy has been in contact with representatives of USAITA, the U.S. trade association representing garment retailers, to explore possible follow-up activities. These include forming a Jordanian delegation to hold a similar program in New York or Los Angeles in the spring; inviting USAITA to hold Board meetings or regional meetings in Amman; inviting USAITA to form a delegation of retailers to visit Jordan for a fact-finding tour; and offers from the Embassy and qualified Jordanians to speak to USAITA members via digital video conference. We will continue this dialogue over the coming months.

-- Environmental Forum Proposals: When the Jordanian private sector delegation met the USG official delegation to the JC on December 11, Imad Badran of the Zarqa Chamber of Industry requested USG assistance in developing a plan to build a waste treatment facility in Zarqa to serve a variety of local industries (Zarqa is the home to most of Jordan's heavy industry, including the oil refinery and steel mill). State/OES expressed interest in following up the project under the umbrella of the Joint Environmental Forum, in keeping with Jordanian delegate Alia Boran's expressed desire to find specific programs for the forum to engage on in the short term.

13. (u) Keeping up the momentum generated by the JC events will be a priority for the Embassy in the coming months. Successful pursuit of the activities outlined above will go a long way toward raising awareness of the FTA's potential among key U.S. and Jordanian business sectors. We look forward to working with interested Washington agencies to make these programs as successful as the JC events that spawned them.

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